

FEATURE

Depot DIs come to rescue of Battery Creek Lady Dolphins

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STAFF WRITER

Depot Marines recently raised money for the Battery Creek High School Lady Dolphins basketball team.

India Company drill instructors, under the leadership of Gunnery Sgt. Andre L. Smallwood, India Company first sergeant, 3rd RTBn., raised \$500 for needed gear for the team. The money went towards the purchase of basketball shoes and warm-ups.

“The fundraiser involved all of the drill instructors in India Company,” said Smallwood. “We ran eight miles to raise awareness and money for the team. We were able to put a dent in the \$1,200 needed to buy the team warm-ups and shoes.”

The Lady Dolphins were not the only ones who benefited from the event. Smallwood and the other drill instructors agreed it was a satisfying experience.

“Anything we can do to help out someone else is great,” said Staff Sgt. Christopher R. Clark, senior drill instructor for Platoon 3012. “For us it is a little bit, for them it is huge. I think this will improve the morale, appearance, pride and performance of the team.”

The idea to help the Lady Dolphins came from a daughter of one of the India Company drill instructors.

“My daughter plays on the team,” said Smallwood. “She said they needed money to buy shoes. She mentioned that it sure would be nice if someone sponsored the team since the school can’t buy them. So we decided to do it.”

Once the idea was put into



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Staff Sgt. Christopher R. Clark, left, senior drill instructor for Platoon 3012, India Company, 3rd RTBn. and Gunnery Sgt. Andre L. Smallwood, first sergeant India Company, 3rd RTBn., present a check to members of the BCHS girls’ basketball team. The money will help the team purchase new gear.

action, it made sense for all involved.

“I had been watching the entire team since they were in sixth grade, and they are juniors and seniors now,” said Smallwood. “They don’t get to do the same things as the boys’ team, like tournaments around town.”

The fundraiser was a welcomed surprise to the coach, as well as the team.

“It definitely was a surprise,” said Joseph Stroman, coach of the Lady Dolphins. “Usually the students buy the shoes, but they offered to buy them for us. It is indescribable. I am excited and I am sure they are excited, and that is something you can’t express in monetary terms.”

The raised funds motivated the team, and solved the problem of some players having better gear than others. Old gear can lead to injuries, said Stroman.

Motivation and dedication are part of the drill instructors daily routine. Smallwood and the others were pleased that they could lend it to others who needed it.

“This is our way of doing community service,” said Smallwood. “We wanted to get other companies involved, but on such short notice, that just wasn’t able to work out this year. We want to plan out some events for next year and have this be the first year of an ongoing thing. As long as the school is there and there are drill instructors in India

Company, we want to make this a tradition.”

No matter how long the tradition carries on, the drill instructors ultimate intent is to act as a role model.

“This will show the students the good things that Marines do for students in general, not just for the [Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps],” said Smallwood.

“This sets an example for the team down the road,” said Clark. “In the future, they can return the good deed.”

The Battery Creek team will start its regular season in the Lowcountry Medical Group BC Classic, Dec. 4 – 6, at Battery Creek High School and Beaufort High School.



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Jessica Hayes, a junior guard on the Battery Creek High School girls’ basketball team, sets up to take a shot during practice drills at BCHS, Nov. 24. India Company, 3rd RTBn. drill instructors raised \$500 for the team to have new athletic equipment.